75¢

VOL. 11 NO. 10
JUNE 1981
ISSUE NO. 225

RAIL TRAVEL NEWS

FROM: P. O. Box 9007
Berkeley, CA 94709 USA

FIRST CLASS MAIL

FIRST CLASS
U. S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 1083
BERKELEY, CA.

To:

comp

Don't Miss An Issue!

SUBSCRIBE TO RTN . . .

RAIL TRAVEL NEWS
P. O. BOX 9007
BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA 94709

Send RTN for _____ year(s) at $18 per year or $9 for six months. My remittance is enclosed. This is:
a new____; renewal/extension____ ; gift____subscription.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

FIRST CLASS

ON THE COVER

VIA Rail Canada's new LRC train painted in the new VIA color scheme of gray above, deep blue below, and yellow trim and lettering. Unfortunately, our color printing shows the VIA blue, which should be a deep violety blue, as purple. The slide was taken on Apr 19 at St. Lambert, Quebec by Guy Chartrand, President of the consumer organization Transport 2000 Canada.

LETTERS

It is with a heavy heart that I write to advise your readers of the recent death of William Zeliff, of Orange, Connecticut, who, from its inception, served as President of the Connecticut Association of Rail and Bus Users, this state's NARP affiliate.

Bill devoted his enormous energy and spirit to the cause of railroad revitalization. Armed at public meetings with sheafs of documents, and ready to vigorously argue in the name of reason and common sense that this nation must realign its transportation priorities by a re-emphasis on rail use, he was an outspoken and effective voice in Connecticut for improved and increased rail passenger service.

Attending the New England Region NARP meeting in Boston last February 7 together, we went to supper afterwards and took the train back to New Haven. On the train, he told me, much to my surprise, that he was in his mid-seventies. His vigor and looks belied his actual age. He told me that he hoped he would be given a number of years to work for good train service--unfortunately, he wasn't.

We shall miss him very much in Connecticut.

James M. S. Ullman, NARP Director from Connecticut
Meriden, Connecticut

BOOKS

"Train Trips: Exploring America by Rail" by William G. Scheller, is being published June 30 by The East Woods Press (820 East Blvd., Charlotte NC 28203). This $7.95, 269-page paperback (8½x5) is a commendable effort by author Scheller to provide a guide to virtually all the passenger train routes of the U.S. as well as the major cities which they reach. The emphasis is upon how to get around on the U.S. system and in the cities it touches. For each of 40-some cities there is valuable and time-consuming-to-locate information on where to stay, where to eat, what to visit that's not too far from the train station. Addresses and telephone numbers are given, including those of city transit systems. The book is illustrated with Amtrak publicity photos and some city maps, many of which don't show the train station locations. The author traveled over 27,000 miles to research the book. He is a free-lance writer who also edits "Appalachia", the journal of the Appalachian Mountain Club, and is Massachusetts correspondent for the Fodor travel guides. He has also written "Country Walks Near New York" and "Country Walks Near Montreal."

Rail Travel News, Vol. 11, No. 10. June, 1981. Whole number 225.
Copyright © 1981 by Message Media.
Published twice monthly by Message Media, P. O. Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709. Subscription $18.00 per year; single copy 75¢. Overseas and institutional rates on request. STAFF: James Russell, Editor. Paul Rayton, Editor-at-Large. Regional Correspondents: Peter Putnam Bretz, Southern California; Jack Ferry, Illinois; Adron Hall, Mississippi; Kenneth Maylath, Maryland; Peter Roehm, Massachusetts.

AMTRAK BUDGET TO BE RECONCILED IN CONGRESS IN JULY: SEVERAL ROUTES WILL BE DISCONTINUED

The House of Representatives on Jun 26 approved the Democratic-sponsored Amtrak funding bill which gives the rail corporation $735 million the first year, $842 million in FY 1983, and specifies no amount for the third year. The bill relieves Amtrak also of $82 million in interest payments. It specifies that the CARDINAL, SHENANDOAH, INTER-AMERICAN and PIONEER be discontinued, and requires Amtrak to eliminate its dining car deficits. The vote was considered a victory, as the lower Republican package offered by Congressman Broyhill (D-NC) was expected to be passed in the House, but was not.

Differences between this bill and the Senate bill will be ironed out in conferences to take place after Congress returns Jul 8 from a holiday. One important difference between the House and Senate versions is that the latter contains no guidelines for Amtrak management regarding route discontinuances, while the House bill makes discontinuance criteria even stricter than they were before. There are a number of other differences, and the National Association of Railroad Passengers said it would send a detailed analysis of the two versions to members enclosing a stamped addressed envelope. NARP's address is 417 New Jersey Ave. S.E. Washington DC 20003.

Amtrak said that, the above legislation aside, it will go ahead on Oct 1 with its revisions of the system: discontinuing the CARDINAL and SHENANDOAH, re-routing the BROADWAY LIMITED via Cumberland, and re-structuring the INTER-AMERICAN.

Amtrak President Boyd has repeatedly stated that the $735 million for the next fiscal year would permit operation of 85% of the existing system. NARP pointed out that this evidently means that 3500 route-miles will be lost unless "extraordinary labor agreements and state and local funding materialize." NARP urged rail supporters to contact their Senators and tell them to seek assurances from Alan Boyd (directly) that the particular train(s) they are interested in are continued.

RAIL CANADA

TORONTO CITY COUNCIL on Jun 23 voted decisively to go ahead with an Intermediate Capacity Transit System (ICTS) for the proposed line between Kennedy station and Scarborough Town Centre, instead of light rail transit, altho the ICTS will cost about $30 million more and will take two years longer to complete. The Scarborough Council and the Toronto Transit Commission approved the plan earlier in the month. The ICTS, which is being developed by the provincially-owned Urban Transportation Development Corporation, is to have automated cars with linear induction motors, pulled along a guideway by magnetic power. One reason for the choice is that there have been complaints about the noise and vibration of the heavy Light Rail Vehicles already in use on the Toronto system. A pizza shop owner plans to sue the TTC for structural damage to his store allegedly caused by the cars. The mayor of Scarborough, however, opposes the ICTS.

VOYAGEUR QUEBEC WORKERS went out on strike at midnight Jun 19. A crowd of workers jeered the last bus out of the Montreal Voyageur Terminal a few minutes after midnight. The strike affected all of Quebec except for the Abitibi line. Strikers had gone out for 4½ days Jun 12-16 over a disciplinary issue, and VIA had to work hard to cover its traffic. The Ottawa/Hull-Lachute-Montreal train was seen on Jun 13 with two Dayniter cars and an ex-CP stainless 100-class transcon coach. Loadings are very heavy in such situations. Daniel Rossell of VIA Quebec says "daily calls for information go up 200-300%. Requests for information at Montreal

go from 8,000 to 20,000 a day." Traffic increases over the whole corridor when buses are out in one part. All of this may help VIA's credibility with government when budgets are considered. A question this situation suggests is: how will VIA do when the summer travel season and the bus strike hit the railway with overlapping traffic surges?

Meanwhile, Voyageur 2 has gone down from five morning and five evening runs each way (Mon-Fri) to just three such. Costs are very high and revenue is poor. Typical loadings are about five per bus maximum as opposed to 20-30 on VIA Club Montreal-Ottawa. Voyageur 2 has no food and drink service--just newspapers and special boarding on MC-1 parlour-car buses with 2-and-1 seating (plush blue). Riding these machines is described as great for rail and trolley parlour car enthusiasts, but the public has not caught on and the service might disappear this fall.

THE MAPLE LEAF (NY-Toronto) startup in April also saw VIA and Amtrak putting two Amfleet cars and a locomotive on display at Toronto Union Station. Canadian observers were impressed with the Amfleet cars. The Toronto Globe and Mail described the cars this way: "The coach cabin gets high marks for comfort and design. Each car is well ventilated and air-conditioned. The vinyl and cloth upholstered reclining seats resemble airline seats; they are wide and comfortable, there are individual reading lights within easy reach overhead, and ample baggage space above as well." But the paper complained about the small windows, commenting that "Perhaps Budd (the manufacturer) was too intent on making the coaches look like jet cabins." It also said the 84-seat coaches are too cramped for a 12-hour trip.

CANADIAN POSTAL WORKERS went on strike as this issue was being prepared, and it appears that it will not be mailed to Canada for an indefinite period of time.

URBAN-SUBURBAN TRANSIT

A SUBWAY CRASH in Brooklyn on July 3 killed one motorman and injured 135 passengers at 1:50 as a train hit the rear of another stationary train, near the Utica Avenue station. Authorities initially blamed the crash on human error and the failure of an ancient signal. About 1000 people were aboard the two Manhattan-bound trains. Only four remained hospitalized by the following day.

CRIME HITS HOME: A member of your editor's family, leaving a San Francisco Muni LRV to transfer to BART at the Embarcadero station on July 3 was robbed by a pickpocket of a wallet containing $9 and a driver's license. But San Francisco has good Samaritans too, and a gentleman, seeing the passenger's plight at the BART fare machine, donated one dollar for fare back to Berkeley. Increasing crime on the Muni has been a touchy issue much noted in the press recently, and this month a group of the self-appointed citizens' Guardian Angels began operations in S.F.

MASS TRANSIT RIDERSHIP has been declining over approximately the last two years and the financial situation of transit agencies generally worsening recently. New York City was getting a fare increase from 60¢ to 75¢ in early July. Chicago got July 1 increases, as reported last issue, the basic fare rising from 80¢ to 90¢. Farebox increases are viewed as part of the financial problem, because they drive away more passengers, compounding the problem. An answer in massive federal assistance seems not to be coming in this fiscally conservative administration.

NEW YORK'S GOVERNOR signed a bill July 1 to give $5.85 billion for capital improvements to the Metropolitan Transportation Authority over the next five years. The legislature is still working on an acceptable tax plan that would grant the MTA funds to cover an expected $200 million shortfall in operating revenues for the current fiscal year, beginning July 1. The above-mentioned bill grants $100 in operating funds to the MTA.

(continued on page 10)

THE EMERGING CORRIDORS REPORT: A CRITICISM AND RE-EVALUATION

by Michael D. Setty

After months of anticipation by rail passenger advocates, the U.S. DOT finally released the final Rail Passenger Corridors report on Apr 9, two months later than originally planned. After an extensive review of the report by this writer, it must be stated unequivocally that politics ruled again in the Federal Railroad Administration, and the report was almost totally negative towards needed rail expansion. Indeed, the cover letter signed by DOT Secretary Lewis stated the Administration's opposition to any corridor improvements. In Amtrak's cover letter, President Boyd stated Amtrak's almost complete opposition to the DOT conclusions, and strong exception to most of the methodologies used in the report (see also QUOTES OF THE WEEK, page 21).

Before detailing my reanalysis of the report, I will list my conclusions:

(1) The methodology and assumptions used in the report are, in general, faulty, incorrect, indefensible, and/or ill-conceived.

(2) Social, equity, and other "non-economic" factors are totally ignored. Since, in most cases, these factors are as important as or more important than strict economics, it is impossible to make judgments as to the validity of the results produced.

(3) From the preliminary Feb 1980 report (see RTN #201) to this one, major changes were made in demand model assumptions, and in the models themselves. The reasons for this are inadequately explained, and appear to be spurious from a transportation planning viewpoint.

(4) The entire validity of this demand modeling process is questionable for the following reasons:

(a) the "Aerospace Corporation" model used is extremely complex and thus subject to error;

(b) it does not relfect actual experience in the real world, as shown by numerous examples such as Los Angeles-San Diego or Toronto-Montreal.

(5) From the comments in the report (page 41) disparaging the highly favorable attitude of the public towards rail service expansion, it can be reasonably inferred that anti-rail attitudes biased the report.

I believe that the following steps should be taken to assess the <u>real</u> potential of rail passenger corridors (and of rail passenger services, including long distance):

(1) The DOT and its FRA should be divorced from any aspects of planning and funding of rail passenger services in intercity markets, given the biases they have demonstrated.

(2) Amtrak and other interested parties, such as states, but not the DOT, should commission an independent consultant with experience in intercity passenger rail to study the potential of U.S. rail passenger service, including corridors, long distance routes, and alternative national networks. Possibilities for knowledgeable consultants include the Canadian Institute of Guided Ground Transport, British Rail, German National Railways, and the Japanese National Railways. Attention must be paid to the passenger interactions between various routes.

(3) Future studies should include the potential of cost-saving measures such as: (a) reform of train crew pay methods from a per-mile basis to a per-hour basis;

(b) elimination of redundant crew members;

(c) use of self-propelled rail cars in appropriate locations, and "push-pull" elsewhere;

(d) electrification, similar to the Philadelphia-Harrisburg corridor operation;

(e) revised station-manning practices;

(f) other economies as can be identified.

(4) Amtrak should consider developing one of the corridors studied to act as a test to develop actual, controlled data. Several corridors could be developed for $50 million or less.

(5) Any study must consider the marginal expenses of adding trains and associated common expenses. In avoidable expenses, pre-existing semi-fixed costs such as stations, track maintenance, or signals must be factored out of the analysis to show net cash flow impacts on Amtrak finances.

★ ★ ★

The financial findings of the report are summarized in the table below, along with corrected figures resulting from the present re-analysis. As a result of methodological errors made by the DOT, it was necessary for me to adjust the Avoidable Expense, Avoidable Loss, and Percentage of Costs Covered by Revenues, as will be discussed later. Of all the corridors studied, the "top" corridors in percentage of long-term (fully allocated) expenses covered by passenger revenues were Los Angeles-San Diego (78%), Chicago-Cincinnati (74%), Los Angeles-Las Vegas (62%), Chicago-Twin Cities (61%), and New York-Buffalo (60%). As seen in the table, the corrections made here change these figures.

The DOT report also detailed expenses involved in upgrading of tracks, signals, stations, and other facilities, as well as additional equipment required. Energy

CORRIDOR	Avoidable Expense		Avoidable Losses		Long-term avoidable loss per psgr mile	% of Costs Recovered		Rank
	DOT	Corrected	DOT	Corrected		DOT	Corrected	
Atlanta-Nashville	10.1	8.3	8.5	6.7	43.5	16	19	18
Atlanta-Savannah	9.9	8.1	9.4	7.6	156.0	5	6	19
Boston-Springfield-New Haven	9.0	7.4	3.1	1.5	2.8	66	80	3
Cleveland-Columb-Cinc.	10.7	8.8	8.0	6.1	22.5	26	31	17
Chicago-Cincinnati	13.6	11.2	3.5	1.1	1.1	74	90	2
Chicago-Cleveland	19.4	16.0	11.3	7.9	9.6	42	51	13
Chicago-Detroit	22.6	18.6	9.0	5.0	3.7	60	73	7
Chicago-St. Louis	19.1	15.8	10.0	6.8	7.7	47	57	11
Chicago-Twin Cities	19.6	16.2	7.7	4.2	3.5	61	74	5
Los Angeles-Las Vegas	16.1	13.3	6.2	3.4	3.5	62	74	4
Los Angeles-San Diego	23.9	19.3	5.3	1.2	0.7	78	94	1
San Jose-Reno	15.2	12.6	9.7	7.1	14.3	36	44	15
Miami-Jacksonville	18.2	15.0	8.8	5.6	6.4	52	63	9
New York-Buffalo	51.4	42.3	20.4	11.2	3.6	60	73	6
Philadelphia-Atlantic City	30.3	25.0	12.2	6.9	3.8	60	72	8
Philadelphia-Harrisburg	13.0	10.7	6.8	4.5	7.6	48	58	10
Seattle-Portland	15.9	13.1	10.0	7.2	13.5	37	45	14
Texas Triangle	45.0	37.2	32.5	24.7	19.1	28	34	16
Washington-Richmond	8.4	6.9	4.5	3.0	8.4	46	56	12

ANNUAL PUBLIC EXPENDITURE
PER PASSENGER MILE AND PER GALLON OF GASOLINE SAVED

Corridor	Annual Public Expenditure Per Passenger Mile Total	Per Passenger Mile Incremental	Per Gallon Saved (lost)* Total	Per Gallon Saved (lost)* Incremental
Atlanta-Nashville	.97	.97	(55.56)	(55.56)
Atlanta-Savannah	3.00	3.00	(35.25)	(35.25)
Boston-Springfield-New Haven	.23	.23	(56.94)	(56.94)
Cleveland-Columbus-Cincinnati	.65	.65	(140.16)	(140.16)
Chicago-Cincinnati	.15	.15	(84.21)	(84.21)
Chicago-Cleveland	.21	.23	11.14	11.86
Chicago-Detroit	.13	.20	29.37	36.63
Chicago-St. Louis	.20	.29	86.47	89.19
Chicago-Twin Cities	.21	.21	35.44	35.44
o Chicago-Milwaukee	.22	.13	(36.28)	(21.62)
Los Angeles-Las Vegas	.14	.12	17.34	15.04
Los Angeles-San Diego	.06	.03	5.07	2.49
San Jose-Reno	.27	.27	(47.64)	(47.64)
o San Jose-Sacramento	.54	.54	(164)	(164)
Miami-Jacksonville	.17	.17	(134.58)	(134.58)
New York-Buffalo	.12	.08	10.95	6.89
o New York-Albany	.28	.21	316.22	260.71
Philadelphia-Atlantic City	.12	.12	7.42	7.42
Philadelphia-Harrisburg	.26	.52	(49.34)	(102.00)
Seattle-Portland	.35	.90	34.07	87.79
Texas Triangle	.49	.49	51.18	51.18
o Dallas/Ft. Worth-Houston	.47	.47	52.37	52.37
o Dallas/Ft. Worth-San Antonio	.67	.67	89.14	89.14
o San Antonio-Houston	.56	.56	39.74	39.74
Washington-Richmond	.22	.16	(30.77)	(22.00)

o Sub-segment of preceding corridor.

* Data in ( ) signifies negative savings

savings per route based on assumptions about passenger diversions from other modes (rail, bus, auto) were calculated, as was an "annual public expenditures per passenger mile" and a table purporting to show public dollars expended per gallon saved. (The latter two DOT results are presented here in the table on the preceding page.)

EVALUATION OF THE REPORT

Considering the potential importance of intercity rail corridor services in the transportation future of the U.S., the authors at FRA have produced a report whose methodology is so poor as to be professionally indefensible.

The ONLY figures of the report that appear to be reasonable are capital expenses, avoidable expenses, and the income and population projections used as base data. The KEY factor in studies of this type is the "demand model"--that is, the set of equations and relationships used to represent the behavior of the traveling public. Many assumptions used in the formulation of this model are questionable; indeed, the model itself is suspect, as I will discuss further.

The following list summarizes the various problems with the methodology and assumptions of the report.

(1) Incremental Cost per Passenger Mile (page 6 of report).

(a) This measure mixes variable, overhead, and fixed investment expenses; it is not sensitive to greater equipment productivity, or lower unit costs, i.e., spreading fixed capital and operating expenses over more trains, such as 6 or 12 round trips per day.

(b) The percentage rate used to write off capital investments; if "real dollars" are used, a "real" interest rate reflecting tax-free bonds should have been used.

(2) Ridership Estimates--Demand Model Assumptions (page 7 of report).

(a) Why was a SECOND demand forecast desired by DOT? What was wrong with the Feb 1980 forecast? Is it possible that the original model produced an estimate that was too high to suit FRA's biases?

(b) Why were the following assumptions changed for the various demand analyses? *Train frequency. *Top speed. *Limit of most corridors to 3 roundtrips per day and 79mph top speed. *The limitation of the corridors studied, such as the short Orlando-Tampa section in Florida.
The explanation the DOT gave for these limitations was that this was for "purposes of comparability and consistency" between corridors. However, this approach ignores evidence garnered in the last few years from the original Metroliner services, the L.A.-San Diego corridor, Montreal-Toronto, British high speed trains, and numerous other U.S. and foreign experiences. Indeed, within reasonable limits speed and frequency are FUNDAMENTAL variables in attracting passengers.

(c) Assumptions do not consider regional cost-of-living differences (p.8).

(d) (p.8 of report) DOT states that the model calculates mode shares based on time and "cost efficiency", and disregards the non-economic (primary) determinants of modal choice--including comfort, safety, in-transit amenities, and general preferences. THUS THE MODEL IGNORES DOCUMENTED CONSUMER REACTION TO VASTLY IMPROVED SERVICES THAT PREVIOUSLY DIDN'T EXIST (such as Metroliners and Japanese Bullet trains).

(e) (p.8 of report) DOT used pre-1977 data, which may not accurately predict the mode preferneces in 1985. Another shortcoming is failure to consider patronage impact of a corridor on connecting routes and revenues.

(f) Problems with the demand model, as outlined in the FRA's 1978 Rail Planning Manual:

*The model is extremely complex and requires mountains of data. It produces between 15 and 27 "distributions" per traveler.

*It is calibrated (adjusted to reflect the real world) on NE Corridor data only.

(This article will be concluded in the next issue of RTN)

Michael D. Setty is a professional transportation planner.

DOWNTOWN STATIONS: THE WAVE OF THE FUTURE

Downtown Pittsfield, Massachusetts Gets Service

By Kevin J. Gregoire

Amtrak began service to its new City Center Station in Pittsfield, Massachusetts on April 26. Since October, 1975 service by the LAKE SHORE LIMITED had been provided to a site technically called "North Adams Junction", located inconveniently in an industrial district on the far east side of the city. We'd been working to get service to downtown even before the LAKE SHORE began operation in 1975.

Getting the station moved downtown required the work and cooperation of many different agencies. First, Pittsfield Congressman Silvio O.Conte asked Amtrak to make the move, and they agreed to do so in April, 1980. The Pittsfield Housing Authority donated the land. The City of Pittsfield donated the entire west end of its municipal parking lot for free Amtrak patron parking. The General Electric Company gave free Margard scratch-resistant, break-resistant glazing material for the station. Amtrak agreed to move its station from East St. to Depot St., build a new platform, apron and walking, and provide utilities. The concept of Amtrak/Community Upgrading Programs was thus fully utilized.

Construction began April 13, 1981 and was sufficiently completed by April 24 that the station could be opened in time for the first train on April 26. We planned a large event to inaugurate service, to begin at 10am, with projected arrival time of train 448 at 10:22am. The new location, in the heart of downtown, is on the site of the former NYC freight house and ½-mile east of the old NYC/New Haven Union Passenger Station. Across the street is the 14-story Berkshire Hilton Hotel complex. Berkshire Regional Transit Authority buses to towns all over the county stop nearby. The Intercity Bus Terminal is a short distance away.

I arrived at the station at 9am on Apr 26 to start setting up for the inaugural stop. Frank Algerio, 13, had painted a very nice 15'x5' banner with a route map of the LAKE SHORE, proclaiming "Pittsfield is Getting into Training" and an F40 locomotive (#448 to match the train number). He and I taped the work of art to the west end of the station despite a strong west wind made worse by a passing westbound Conrail freight train. Next we stretched a 100' x 3" bright red ribbon across the tracks, to be cut by the engine of the arriving LAKE SHORE. Finally, we set up a battery-powered public address system, since electricity was not connected yet.

Intercity Bus Station owner Ron Trabulsi arrived with free coffee and donuts for all patrons of the ceremony. Amtrak District Superintendent Joe Arcurri brought brand new timetables, and Amtrak baggage tags to distribute as souvenirs.

About 100 people had gathered on the cold, windy morning, and the sun began to peek thru the clouds as we started the ceremony. Because of schedule changes and the change to Daylight Saving Time, the train was due to arrive about a half hour late, so we'd have about an hour for the pre-inaugural.

I began introducing a host of speakers. First was NARP Vice President Sam Stokes, who was the last passenger to arrive at the old location, and would be the first to depart from the new. Sam delivered an eloquent speech, outlining the dangers in the threatened Amtrak budget cuts. Mayor Charles Smith of Pittsfield spoke next, outlining his hopes that this would be the first step in the development of a multi-modal transportation terminal in the city. NARP Director Tom Richardson of Manchester, Vermont spoke of his desires to see Montreal-Burlington-Pittsfield-New York train service instituted. Foster McMillan and Tom Berwin of the Connecticut Railroad Historical Association spoke of their wishes for train service to be reinstituted between Pittsfield, Danbury and New York on the Housatonic River Valley, ex-New Haven line. Former NARP Director Bill Ensign of Westfield, who had successfully convinced Amtrak to stop the LAKE SHORE there the

previous month for the first passenger train in 31 years, spike of the desire to increase frequency on this route. Nicholas Speranzo, Chairman of the Pittsfield Housing Authority, spoke of this as the first step in the revitalization of the downtown. Joseph Arcurri of Amtrak thanked all parties for their cooperation with Amtrak to make the move possible. The only missing person, Congressman Conte, unavailable due to Congressional demands, would have a special dedication ceremony arranged by Amtrak the following Saturday.

In the distance coming around the curve, thru the rock cut, and under the South Meriam Street Bridge, roared Amtrak F40 engine #346, resplendent in red, white, blue and platinum mist, headlight blazing, strobes flashing and air horns blaring melodiously for a full 5-minute entrance to the station. A camera crew from WRGB Channel 6 in Schenectady recorded the event for the evening news, as did three newspapers and at least six radio stations. Barely moving one mile an hour, the LAKE SHORE cleanly broke the red ribbon stretched across the tracks and came to a halt, disgorging a couple dozen passengers. Surprised riders aboard gazed out at the throng of people. City Councilor at Large Joseph Ryan and his son, along with Empire State Passenger Association VP Jeff English of Troy got off from the coaches. Conrail Engineer/dentist/NARP member/RTN reader Bill McDonald hopped off the engine, informing us he'll be a regular engineer on this train. The conductor asked me to "highball 448" over his train radio, and the first Amtrak departure took place minutes after its arrival. The locomotive, Amdinette, three Heritage Fleet coaches, one sleeper, and baggage car quickly disappeared into the North Street Bridge-Tunnel on its way out of town.

The ceremony concluded with speeches by Joe Ryan, praising Amtrak for its move downtown; Jeff English, asking people to support full funding for Amtrak; and Bill McDonald, urging Amtrak to work with Conrail for higher speeds and faster running times on this end of the line. The first passenger train to stop downtown in 13 years, since 1968, and the first Amtrak train in history to stop downtown, was the cause of great celebration to start Amtrak's Tenth Birthday. The increase in patronage should help convince Amtrak that downtown stations are the way of the future, not just a nostalgia trip into the past.

(Kevin Gregoire is a NARP Director from Massachusetts.)

Urban-Suburban Transit (continued from page 4)

LONG ISLAND RAIL ROAD and Conrail commuter lines in New York are getting 25% fare increases effective July 15.

HOUSTON'S TRANSIT AUTHORITY has voted to go ahead with a $28.5 million engineering study of a proposed Westpark Corridor heavy rail system, altho the federal government says it will not pay for its construction.

THE SOUTHERN PACIFIC has appealed a California Public Utilities Commission order to begin rail commuter operation in contract with Caltrans between Los Angeles and Oxnard. On Jun 16 the PUC modified the terms of the proposed contract significantly in SP's favor, so that observers believe that implementation of the order could come soon.

$16 MILLION GRANT from UMTA to San Francisco was announced Jun 23, to help buy 15 more LRV's and to modify 100 present LRV's so they can operate in trains of up to four cars long.

EX-READING LINES Pottsville-Pottstown and Bethlehem-Quakertown PA were expected to see Conrail commuter service ending June 30 unless some last-minute agreement was effected for the 70 miles of line. Money was available to PennDOT, but there was disagrement over responsibility for running the lines.

CONRAIL THREATENED PHILADELPHIA with termination of rail service operated for SEPTA as of Aug 31 because SEPTA was budgeting only $93 million for the fiscal year beginning July 1 instead of the $99 million asked by Conrail.

AMTRAK RIDERSHIP FIGURES

	MAR 1981		APR 1981	
Metroliners	110,592	-21.9	112,193	-18.1
NE Corr Conventional	393,829	-6.0	423,285	3.8
Phila-NH-Springfld	28,182	10.3	28,330	14.7
NY-Philadelphia	184,390	-16.7	194,837	-4.9
Phila-Harrisburg	81,104	-11.6	76,278	-16.1
NY-Harrisburg	26,844	38.1	26,968	30.0
TOTAL NE CORRIDOR:	824,941	-10.2	861,891	-2.7
NY-Niagara Falls	56,424	-1.8	65,610	20.8
Chicago-St. Louis	7,752	-22.8	8,358	-17.6
Chicago-Milwaukee	24,478	-10.0	28,971	-4.4
Chic.-Detroit/Toledo	38,434	3.6	45,830	9.6
Chicago-Carbondale	16,042	2.6	15,380	-5.5
Chicago-Quincy	7,502	-18.6	8,000	-9.6
L.A.-San Diego	91,757	-5.9	106,515	1.3
Vancouver-Eugene	12,928	-3.3	15,638	32.3
Washington-Cincinnati	12,551	2.6	13,415	5.3
Wash.-Martinsburg	23,579	.5	21,930	-11.9
Oakland-Bakersfield	11,101	-20.5	14,761	-15.6
New York-Montreal	8,154	-16.9	10,035	-.8
Chicago-Port Huron	9,226	9.1	11,035	10.2
Chicago-Dubuque	3,019	-28.3	3,110	-14.8
Chicago-Duluth	12,284	32.1	21,075	117.6
Chicago-Valparaiso	19,886	11.0	19,836	4.9
Chicago-Indianapolis	7,311	--	7,496	--
Chicago-Peoria	2,043	--	2,531	--
Chicago-Kansas City	17,970	45.1	20,484	38.4
Phila.-Pittsburgh	6,048	--	7,092	--
Portland-Eugene	7,206	--	6,879	--
TOTAL SHORT DIST.:	395,695	4.3	453,981	13.1
Washington-Montreal	36,324	12.8	42,044	17.8
New York-Florida	67,683	2.9	72,774	4.5
Chicago-NY/Washington	22,000	21.4	25,683	20.0
Chicago-Cincinnati/DC	10,672	8.0	15,460	17.9
Chicago-Seattle	17,664	14.8	18,952	28.3
Chicago-S.F./L.A.*	44,677	1.6	45,145	11.8
Chicago-Los Angeles	24,111	1.2	28,870	11.3
Chicago-New Orleans	17,175	-3.6	20,150	8.8
Chicago-Texas	24,228	27.1	27,798	24.5
L.A.-New Orleans	7,946	3.0	8,620	-1.1
L.A.-Seattle	45,072	1.9	53,364	25.9
Chicago-NY/Boston	27,796	19.6	33,104	22.5
Boston-Newport News	37,063	-33.7	43,342	-24.8
New York-Savannah	32,420	-3.0	39,097	1.8
Seattle-Salt Lake	15,425	8.1	15,010	13.0
New York-New Orleans	41,612	94.4	47,403	85.7
TOTAL LONG DIST.:	471,868	5.7	536,816	13.1
Special trains	11,866	12.2	4,180	-49.6
SYSTEM TOTAL:	1,704,370	-2.9	1,856,868	4.9

*SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR plus DESERT WIND

(For each month, the second column is the percentage of change from the corresponding month of 1980.)

The accompanying ridership figures, for March and April, were never received from Amtrak headquarters, and we had to obtain them elsewhere. Possibly Amtrak was in no hurry to publicize its March figures during the height of Congressional negotiations over the Amtrak budget, given the uninspiring March figures. That month, systemwide ridership was down 2.9%, altho this was accounted for mainly by the continued Northeast Corridor dropoff in patronage. Short distance trains were also putting in an unimpressive performance in March, with the total up only 4.3%, with only two routes showing impressive increases (Chicago-Duluth and Chicago-Kansas City). Long distance trains continued to demonstrate solid increases, with the total being up 5.7%, and only one route (Boston-Newport News giving a poor showing.

April was better all the way around, with short- and long-distance trains both up 13.1%, and the Northeast Corridor off only 2.7% (NEC Conventional trains actually showed an increase for the first time in months). Systemwide ridership was up 4.9% in April.

For the fiscal year as a whole--Oct 1980 thru Apr 1981--Amtrak ridership was down .4%, at a total of 11,589,270 patrons. This dropoff was due to continued poor Northeast Corridor showings.

We do not have separate figures for the SF ZEPHYR and DESERT WIND, which are combined in one in Amtrak's tally.

AMTRAK TRIES AIRLINE-STYLE DINING CAR FOOD

By Paul Rayton

On June 16 an era ended in Los Angeles and other cities along the Santa Fe line between there and Chicago. On that date, the final departure of a "conventional" railroad dining car for Chicago occurred, to be replaced the following day by a new-era service: airline-style meals served on throwaway dishes with plastic knives, forks and spoons, placed on a plastic tray. This change affected not only the SOUTHWEST LIMITED, but also the SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR, BROADWAY LIMITED and CRESCENT.

Eliminated are most of the other trappings of the dining car days of the past --tablecloths, cloth napkins, flowers and expanded menus.

The passing went virtually unannounced by Amtrak. A reporter riding the departing train on the 16th found no passengers aboard aware that they were involved in an historical, albeit not necessarily happy, event. There was a certain amount of speculation among the crew members as to their employment future, and an aura of defeat seemed to pervade. The final conventional steak dinner they were to serve in California was about par for the Amtrak course--an adequate piece of meat, cooked properly and served fairly attractively on a china plate.

The following morning (June 17) found the first arriving train using the new airline-type service. It had originated in Chicago on Monday, June 15. Passengers on board had been advised of the revised dining car service by notices posted about the train, describing the new service as "designed to be economical, good-tasting, fast and convenient." The change was not universally well-received by the passengers taking the trip. This was compounded by the fact that, for the final meal (breakfast) served before arrival in L.A., the dining car had run out of many of the few items available on the menu: no milk, no toast (only rolls), no inexpensive hot breakfast (an item similar to McDonald's "Egg McMuffin"), and the previous evening, the seafood, one of the mere three entrees, had also been sold out. The service is alleged to be designed to allow heavy overstocking so as to eliminate "run outs", but this maiden run, coupled as it was with the first heavy burst of summer vacation travelers, did not fare too well. It is assumed that adjustments in stocking procedures in the future will minimize this problem.

In random comments from passengers, opinions ranged from passive acceptance to derision. One lady arriving from Illinois was disappointed by the change but added, "I accept it as going along with the times." Dorothea Barnes, arriving via a circuitous routing from Texas, said: "You miss the white tablecloths and the red carnations and all, but you have to give up one thing for another." Another lady described her chicken dinner as "very good," but a retired CB&Q em-

"Before" and "after" steak dinners on the SOUTHWEST LIMITED. At left is pre-economy dinner complete with tablecloth and china. At right (page 13) is steak on a tray airline-style. Amtrak timetable by tray gives size comparison. (Top right:) The last SOUTHWEST LIMITED to leave L.A. with full dining service waits at Barstow. Photos by the author.

ployee was particularly upset. He had broken his fork the previous evening trying to cut his steak, and his stage whispers of criticism over the pancake breakfast were hard to avoid. There had also been several complaints of slow service after orders had been placed. The omelet breakfast was served hot. It was a typical frozen-egg product. A rider was unable to find other compliments to pay this meal.

Clark Gay of Amtrak's Washington headquarters was aboard the arriving train, observing and taking notes about the operation. In an interview he expressed satisfaction with the first run. "I think we've got a very good, first class service started." He admitted to a "few small flaws" that would have to be corrected, but saw no major problems and did not anticipate any substantial changes in the service.

Asked whether this was a trial run for a type of service to be implemented on all Amtrak long distance trains nationwide, Gay said that it was. "(This is) a trial only in the sense that we are here to correct. The situation, as you said, is a predecessor to the service that we will be seeing on all of our dining cars." He added that riders could probably expect to find this service in all dining cars "by October of this year."

Gay stated that these meals were intended to be markedly better than a comparable meal served on an airline, indicating that Amtrak intends to buy a "better

grade" of packaged meal for the tray service, but he did not explain how this would be perceived as "better" by passengers forced to use plastic implements to eat when even in coach-class airline service they would eat with stainless steel implements. Gay was asked also about the fact that on airplanes this type of food was included at no additional cost to the passenger; he again declared that there would be a perceptible level of improvement if they were to be compared side by side.

Another Amtrak official, R. Pearson of Chicago, also aboard the maiden run, indicated that the decision to go with this type of service had been made relatively hastily and that they had been told only four weeks ago that they were going to have to put this into effect. He said that there will be some modifications in the tray package as the program gets into full operation: the present flat tray will be replaced by one that has recessed sections for each segment of the meal (beverage, salad, entree, butter, etc.).

Apparently the decision to make this radical change in service was not made easily, and critics of the move at headquarters have been told in no uncertain terms that they will hew to the company line on this subject, or else. With approximately 85% of all passengers being in the coach class, it was simply no longer possible, in an era of budgetary restrictions, to run a loss-leader service that had primary appeal to the 15% of passengers perhaps more accustomed to traditional dining cars.

Amtrak's new lunch-dinner menu that Paul Rayton encountered on the SOUTHWEST LIMITED listed three dinner selections: Broiled sirloin steak with Anna potatoes and garden vegetables ($6.75); Baked chicken breast with rice pilaf and buttered mixed vegetables ($5.50); and Mixed seafood Americana, with baby shrimp, crab meat and scallops prepared in a light sauce, with steamed rice and buttered peas ($5.50). Each entree came with fruit cup, lettuce & tomato salad, Amtrak dressing, roll, butter and beverage (coffee, tea, milk or Sanka). At lunch, besides the above items, two sandwich selections were available: grilled cheeseburger ($2.25) and ham and Swiss cheese on a soft roll ($2.45). Desserts were apple pie and cheese cake (each 90¢). The normal range of beverages was also available. On the reverse of this card was the breakfast menu, listing three choices plus a children's breakfast of dry cereal. Juice, coffee, tea and milk were the beverage choices.

The busy-season full crew is cut by some seven employees, which will make a major impact on dining car expenses, even tho service will probably suffer a bit as the two remaining waiters in a Superliner dining car will have to serve 36 seats apiece. Gay allowed as how the waiters had in fact "worked harder than they normally did" and was still open-minded as to whether Amtrak would adhere to this minimal staffing level.

But the problem of 50% dining car losses was still the critical sore point in the internal Amtrak decision to make a change of this magnitude. Other options considered were tremendous food price increases, a dual level (coach/first class) of quality and service but still using frozen, portion-control foodstuffs, and--in all seriousness--a return to automat-type service such as Southern Pacific once operated.

A representative of the waiters' union was also riding on board, to evaluate the transition for his members. He was quite realistic in his appraisal of the situation, feeling that if they (and Amtrak) didn't make a success of this experiment, there might not be ANY trains or ANY dining cars anymore.

For reasons that had not been determined as of arrival in Los Angeles, the lounge car had been substantially busier on this journey.

A return visit three days later to evaluate a dinner meal witnessed much the same diversity of opinion among the passengers about the merits of the new service. For the most part, sleeping car passengers were substantially more critical of the change, some feeling that they were paying premium prices for their ride

and that this unannounced cheapening of the dining car operation was an ill-advised move and left them shortchanged. They had paid premium fares partially in expectation of traditional dining car service.

Amogn the coach passengers, one couple liked it "okay", altho they were first-time riders and said they didn't really know to what it should be compared. Another man was very positive, felt it was a good idea, especially if it kept the prices down (the steak dinner dropped in price from $11.95 to $6.75). A third couple had had an "old-style" meal earlier in the day on the COAST STARLIGHT and wanted to go back to that: "...this is terrible."

At dinner the steak was served hot, but a reporter was not aware of any significant improvement over a similar meal item served on an airplane. The same could be said for the chicken entree (recommended by the Steward as probably the best value), and the less said about the vegetables the better. Wine is still available, but it is no longer a setting or presentation at which wine could be used as a catalyst to turn a meal from "eating" into "dining." The small salad came with (per the menu) "Amtrak Dressing"--which arrived packed in an individual container with a pictograph of an airplane on the cap.

All hot good, according to Gay, is pre-cooked and frozen. It is then brought up to serving temperature in the kitchen, using microwave equipment.

Among the first-time travelers on Amtrak, most of those interviewed seemed to accept the tray-style food service as the norm and didn't worry about it too much. But an unsolicited remark from another (sleeping car) couple, as they arose to leave after their dinner, summed up the feelings of several other veteran train travelers: "Reagan didn't have to cut the budget to get rid of Amtrak. I think the food is going to do it for him!"

VIA RAIL RECALLS THE GOOD OLD DAYS

by Joel Kamisher

Riding the trains in Canada is like entering a time warp. It's the early 1950's all over again. Streamlined trains with domes, upper and lower berths and sleeping car porters, the trains powered by E and F units with steam generators are the rule rather than the exception on transcontinental runs. RDC's and even a few mixed trains are preventing branch lines from becoming "freight service only." First class travel is still affordable. An 8-day Canrail pass and roomettes on the Vancouver to Edmonton route of the SUPER CONTINENTAL, RDC from South Edmonton to Calgary, and return to Vancouver on the CANADIAN costs only $135 (U.S. dollars, off-season).

VIA Rail has shifted its Vancouver operations to the former CN station, an excellent location for viewing the two transcon trains before their evening departure. But more conveniently located in the downtown area is the former CP station, now handsomely renovated into a shop and office complex. It is also the terminal for the Sea-Bus ferry system. While the station is in great shape, the track and platform are rapidly deteriorating. A few CP office cars are still parked at the station when not in use.

On May 20 a 9-car SUPER CONTINENTAL with two engines, baggage-dorm car, coach 5469, full dome lounge "Jasper", Dayniter coach 5733, diner 1358, and sleepers "Enfield", "Elizabeth", and "Chateau Argenson" departed promptly at 8:00pm on its eastbound journey. The diner (with 32 seats and a first class lounge for 12) began serving from the snack menu, which includes hamburgers, hot beef and other sandwiches, along with soups, an omelet, and desserts. I had a good slice of blueberry pie with a generous scoop of vanilla ice cream ($1.35 Canadian), served by a cheerful young waitress, one of many college students working during the summer. After the one call for dinner, the waitresses conduct a Bingo game with small prizes for the winners.

The dome lounge now has a bar in the middle of the upper section with two

separate areas that seat a total of about 80 people in groups of two and four. The seats could be a bit higher to make scenery viewing a bit easier. Most of the glass windows were spotless, but a few had streaks in them, still very clean by Amtrak Lexan standards. For some reason, only the upper section of the car is licensed for the sale and consumption of alcoholic beverages. The lounge offers a good selection of newspapers and major American and Canadian magazines. "Big Jim," the bartender on this trip, was a very friendly employee. He shook hands and introduced himself to many passengers.

Around midnight I returned to my duplex roomette (regular and duplex are sold at the same rate; you have no way of knowing what you'll be spending the night in unless you deal with an agent who pays close attention to the car floor plans). My lower duplex roomette appeared to have been remodeled very recently. The wash basin looked as if it had been shined by a marine preparing for inspection. The only problem with the lower roomette is that it lacks a luggage rack. The problem is solved by putting suitcases under the seat cushion before sliding the bed out.

After a restful night's sleep, I had a good breakfast, and the train arrived 15mins early at the crew change point of Blue River. The train was held here 1½ hours because of a double-tracking project and concrete tie installation program expected to continue thru the summer. Once out of this small town, the scenery becomes truly spectacular. This is the Canadian Rockies area that is a major reason for making the trip.

Interior (full-length dome lounge) and exterior views of the SUPER CONTINENTAL. Photos by the author.

During lunch, I learned that a mudslide the night before had blocked the main line, and the SUPER CONTINENTAL was the first train thru that day.

VIA uses a reservation system for lunch and dinner, with smoking allowed only at the last sitting. On this day there were only two calls for lunch, which meant eating too soon after breakfast or risking sharing a table with a smoker. Fortunately, there were no smokers at my table. A crew member told me that trying to find a fair solution is one of VIA's biggest problems. An outright ban on smoking in the diner brought strenuous objections and the present policies.

Lunch and dinner menus are the same, with prime rib added at dinner time. In the evening, candles lit at the tables give a touch of class.

The plastic era has hit VIA in the form of packaged butter, syrup and salad dressings. But at least the butter isn't frozen, and real cream is still used instead of chemical substitutes. Much of the cooking is done on the train. I had an excellent chicken pot pie for lunch, and chicken dinner, both in the $5 to $6 range.

There isn't enough space to describe the spectacular scenery. VIA has a book for tour passengers showing important sights by milepost, and histories of the rail lines and towns along the way. The VIA passenger service reps and train

crews pointed out sights along the way. Only one porter asked me not to stand in the vestibule.

We never made up the lost time, and arrived at the modern Edmonton terminal about 2 hours late. Mixed train service between Edmonton and Lac la Biche/Waterways is provided in heavyweight coach caboose cars obtained from the Boston and Albany. The service is not listed in any VIA timetable I saw, but the cars were visible from the station.

Edmonton's new light rail transit system is more accessible. After coming out of the subway, the cars share the CN right of way as far as North Edmonton. The ride is reminiscent of a 1930's interurban line in many ways, with grade crossings protected only by bells and gates. Switch engines and freights pass close by the modern German-built cars.

The next leg of the trip requires a cab or city bus ride to South Edmonton to board the RDC for Calgary. While the blue and gold VIA paint was already fading fast on the car, the refurbished interior of the car looked like new. The RDC is divided into separate smoking and non-smoking sections. The Budd car accelerated smoothly out of town and sped thru farmlands and a few rapidly expanding subdivisions built to accommodate the growing population unable to find housing in Calgary or Edmonton. About two hours later, we arrived at Red Deer, the halfway point where we had to board a bus because the line was closed for track rebuilding. Later in the month the line was to be shut down north of Red Deer for rebuilding on that stretch, even tho the line seemed to be in good shape. The conductor joined the bus riders for the remainder of the trip to pick up tickets at intermediate points.

TAKE IT EASY. TAKE THE TRAIN.

On arrival in Calgary, I found that a wildcat strike at Revelstoke had shut down operations over the most scenic part of the VIA run. Two days later the strike was still on, and I joined other passengers for the bus ride from Banff to Kamloops where we were scheduled to board the CANADIAN for the overnight run to Vancouver. About all that can be said for the bus is that it is a bit faster than the train. We arrived at Kamloops by 8:30 in time for a complimentary dinner (hot roast beef with soup and vegetables, and ice cream for dessert). The crew did its best to help passengers thru a difficult time, but it was clearly an upsetting experience to travel this far and get caught in a strike. During the two hours before our scheduled departure, I had a chance to explore the refurbished cars on the CANADIAN. The Skyline coffee shop dome and the "Park" dome observation both looked splendid with newly-refurbished seats, tables and chairs. The crew in the coffee shop was passing out free oranges, ice cream and coffee. Soft drinks were not free, apparently because they are considered to be a bar item. The Dayniter coaches also looked very nice as they sat quietly in the station. Even tho the engines were hooked up, the all-day idling in the station was draining the batteries, and many cars had their lights dimmed to save power.

Shortly before departure, rumors spread among the passengers and crew that the strike had spread to Kamloops and we would be marooned here. The tickeg agent insisted that the train would leave on schedule. I had my doubts when I saw the conductor and brakeman walk away with their bags and equipment.

About 40mins later, the VIA representative confirmed that we would be spending the night on the train in the station, given a continental breakfast and taken to the airport for a charter flight to Vancouver the next morning. And that's exactly what happened.

The only real sour note of the trip occurred after the flight, when some of the crew members boarded the first bus back to the station, stranding passengers at the airport until the next charter bus came by.

Mixed train of thoughts

AMTRAK TRAINS 380-381, the ILLINI, have been extended as far as Decatur IL, effective in July. A special inaugural train ran on Jul 1, with regular service beginning Jul 2. Previously, the ILLINI terminated at Champaign IL. The new extension has it continuing south on the ICG to Tolono IL, where it turns southwest on the N&W as far as Decatur.....

JAPANESE BULLET TRAINS have been talked up by Amtrak President Alan Boyd in recent months, as noted in previous issues of RTN. Now the state of Florida has begun a study of their use in high-speed U.S. rail applications. It was reported late in June that a U.S. consultant to the Japanese Railways has proposed the idea of using Interstate highway median strips to carry Bullet train lines. This would be done in conjunction with rebuilding and repairing part of the existing highway system, and could be financed by private investors. He noted that the Japanese trains have gained profits of 38-54% in the time they have been operating.....

GUARANTEED BUS CONNECTIONS for COAST STARLIGHT passengers between Sacramento and Davis CA began operation July 1, using Greyhound buses subsidized by Caltrans. At the same time, guaranteed bus connections between Bakersfield and Los Angeles for the SAN JOAQUINS began, for both trains in both directions. Finally, bus connections to and from the SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR and SAN JOAQUINS at Oakland (except for train 709) to the Caltrans commute train station in San Francisco began.....

★ ★ ★

WALL STREET JOURNAL carried a large, good, prominent article on Amtrak on Jun 25, written by transportation writer Albert R. Karr. The title explains it: "As Congress comes to rescue, Amtrak envisions the best passenger train service in its history." The one sentence that has us puzzled is this: "To eliminate costly sleepers, some trains that now run overnight will be scheduled to run during the day instead".....

AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLERS had threatened to go on strike Jun 22, but the strike was called off at the last minute, with a contract agreement having been reached just three hours before the strike deadline. Amtrak was preparing to try to cope with vastly increased patronage at an already heavy time. Doubtless, the number of reservations and inquiries was already mounting. A King Features Syndicate newspaper cartoon by Jim Borgman pictured Amtrak as disappointed by the non-strike. A train was pictured with a band and a big sign "Welcome New Amtrak Passengers", and a billboard, "Amtrak--Keeping America Moving During the Air Controllers Strike". As an airliner passes overhead, glum faces look upwards and mutter "Nuts!".....

LEAKING TANK CAR on a Conrail freight halted the BROADWAY LIMITED for 8 hours on Jun 11 at Latrobe PA. The BROADWAY that had left Chicago Jun 10 boarded 6 passengers at Greensburg PA who had been sprayed with a chemical from the tank car as they waited on the platform. The chemical, octyl alcohol, is used in making perfume, and was leaking from a valve under the 29th car of an eastbound freight. The freight stopped at Derry PA and the fire department was called. Amtrak stopped the BROADWAY at Latrobe and there let off the passengers, who were feeling ill, to be sent to a hospital. The train was backed up to Pitcairn to escape the fumes, which were now affecting other passengers and crew. At Pitcairn, 22 passengers were sent to hospitals, and the train crew asked to be relieved. The fire department and paramedics treated other passengers on the train. The BROADWAY went on to Greensburg, where it waited for passengers treated at hospitals to be returned. Only two remained hospitalized, and were reported in good condition. Train 37, the FORT PITT, stopped at Torrance at 7:41am, and was delayed 159 minutes.....

THE 75th ANNIVERSARY of the first Key System train into Oakland in 1906 will be marked by an exhibit of 70 historic photographs in the lobby of Lloyd's Bank near the 19th Street BART station in Oakland from now until Jul 24.....

THE NORTH STAR is being continued, with renewed state funding, as reported in RTN previously. The state funding starts in July, but it ran out for the month of June. Amtrak decided to keep the train running during June, however, without the state money, because of the good ridership record the train showed during the months of Mar, Apr and May. Total ridership for that time was 34,733, or almost double the patronage of the same three months of 1980. A reader writes concerning the NORTH STAR: "One of its unsolved problems is the impossible connection with the EMPIRE BUILDER going west out of Minneapolis the same evening. They miss each other by 45mins. People wishing to take Amtrak westward must either go by Greyhound to get to Minneapolis early, or stay overnight to catch the train the next day".....

THE ABOVE PHOTO shows the interior of a Hi-level lounge car that has been refurbished and converted to head-end power by Amtrak, and used in conjunction with Superliner cars. Note the 2- and 4-person table seating, and the retention of Santa Fe murals on the bulkhead. Photo by Paul Rayton.....

SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE seems to have changed its editorial tune in the face of massive public opinion. When the Amtrak budget question first came up earlier this year, it sided editorially with the Reagan budget cutters. However, popular columnist Herb Caen several times wrote pro-Amtrak remarks following that shocking editorial. Now on Jun 12 the paper editorialized about the "Rescue of Amtrak": "A cheer goes up here for the surprise move of the Senate Commerce Committee in saving Amtrak from federal budgetary overkill".....

THE HIGH COST of other modes: The American Automobile Association in June said it had estimated that the cost of operating an average car is now 24.8¢ per mile, up 3.4¢ from the year before.....

SPEAKING OF AUTOMOBILES, we were surprised to find that in the July issue of Motor Trend magazine one auto article is photographed with a background of Amtrak trains. A road test of a Saab model had photos taken by John Gates at, evidently, Los Angeles Union Station. Six photos show the railroad backdrop. The first and largest features Amtrak engine 511, engine 289, and car 8153 "Whitefish Lake" on three separate tracks behind the Swedish automobile. Another photo has the car in front of a Superliner coach, no number visible.....

THE DESERT WIND became an all-Superliner car train on Jun 15, with the addition of a thru Superliner sleeping car that is switched to and from the SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR at Ogden.....

THE DERAILMENT OF the southbound SILVER METEOR, train 97, on May 26 in Lochloosa FL (reported here in issue #223) caused train 98 the next day to run with the following consist: engines 270 and 636; cars 1409, 2797, 8012, 3343, 5476, 5413, 5804, 5010, 4614, and 4618.....

A BOMB SCARE delayed departure of SAN DIEGAN train 584 from Los Angeles on May 28. A man telephoned the station, saying there was a bomb aboard. L.A. police came but brought the wrong dog--the narcotics-sniffing dog rather than the bomb-sniffing animal, and there was further delay. Finally the train was sniffed and searched and approved for departure, after being delayed 139mins. Train 583 was also delayed 50mins. Passengers were offered other means of transportation, but the majority of them preferred to await the train departure.....

★ ★ ★

THE FLORIDA TRAINS seem to be having more than their share of lateness since mid-June, reports a Florida reader. Since the summer business has picked up, he says, both southbound trains have run from one to four hours late, averaging about two hours late daily. Delays are spread evenly between the conventionally-equipped STAR and the electrified METEOR.....

GAS PLANT EXPLOSION east of Gallup NM on May 29 caused the SOUTHWEST LIMITED, train 4, to terminate at Gallup, and train 3 terminated at Albuquerque. Passengers were bused between the two sets of equipment, which were turned. Train 3 left about 3hrs late and train 4 6-7hrs late. When train 4 reached Kansas City its consist was recorded as follows: engines 234 & 633; Superliner cars 32061, 32045 & 38030, Hi-level 39971, Superliners 34021, 34036 & 31016, Hi-level 39927. Train consists thus were reversed. Baggage cars were left at point of termination.....

NEW YORK TIMES' Tom Wicker wrote a nice column on Amtrak in June (date not available). He pointed out how the average airline trip is increasing in length while the average bus and auto trip are shortening (bus is about 100 miles in length), leaving Amtrak a big gap of medium-length distances to fill. Quote: "...in contrast to the years when Amtrak's survival was in doubt, the outlook IS rosy. And the system hasn't even yet begun to develop its greatest potential--high-speed, high-density service in short-haul corridors like Los Angeles-San Diego, New York-Buffalo and Chicago-Detroit".....

★ ★ ★

A CLOSET RAILFAN? Usually reliable sources say that President Reagan was very fond of trains before he ran for Governor of California (remember his declarations in UP ads about how he enjoyed domeliner service), so much so that the alarmed SP footed the bill for deconditioning treatment to make Reagan lose his dislike of airplane travel.....

RUSSIAN RAIL CRASH reportedly killed 70 people and injured over 100 on or about Jun 28, when a local train and an express collided near Gagra, a popular resort in Soviet Georgia.....

THE HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT Union Station, after years of frustrating negotiations, is being sold to the Greater Hartford Transit District for rebuilding into a multi-modal transportation and commercial center. Amtrak, Greyhound and Trailways will operate out of the facility. The $1.5 million agreement came Jun 19.....

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR is another newspaper that evidently switched its editorial stance on Amtrak. After publishing a support-the-cuts editorial Apr 29, it must have been deluged with irate letters, for it published five of them in its May 14 issue, and then on Jun 1 wrote an editorial supporting Amtrak, and particularly Amtrak's plan to diversify into business ventures and try to reduce or eliminate its need for federal subsidies. (And for that bright move we have Alan Boyd to thank also).....

THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION of RR Passengers warns in a special first-class mailing of its newsletter at the end of June that the so-called National Taxpayers Union is making a big push to counter the NARP effort and to kill Amtrak. The NTU reportedly will spend $154,250 on a 9-month campaign to bolster its anti-Amtrak

activities. NARP reports that "Indeed, NTU has virtually transformed itself into the 'NTU Transportation Policy Committee' whose executive director is erstwhile NTU Executive Director Len Rippa and whose sole interest is ending Amtrak." The 9-month budget is larger than an entire NARP 12-month budget. NARP plans to continue leafleting during the summer, and they will need more volunteers (we gave NARP's address on page 3).....

STEAM ENGINE 1294, donated by the SP to the city of San Francisco in 1956, and which was on display at Fleishacker Zoo, was sold to a San Leandro CA wrecking company in June and cut up for scrap. The sale took the Pacific Locomotive Ass'n by surprise; it was about to start a fund-raising campaign to save the 1924-built Lima locomotive.....

NEW WEST MAGAZINE (July issue) contains a gem of a little article by Tom DeVries entitled "Pleasures of the San Joaquin". ("From Oakland to Bakersfield, it's the best thing going.")

News in this issue is updated thru July 5, 1981.

QUOTES OF THE WEEK***

"Amtrak has for some time believed that densely populated corridors offer the most promising markets for the development of cost-effective passenger rail service in the United States. We have been encouraged in this belief by the successful experience other industrialized countries have had in operating this kind of service. The findings of this study now confirm our view. We are impressed by the favorable economic projections associated with many of these corridors, and we are prepared, with Congressional support, to move to a design and implementation phase."

--Amtrak President Alan S. Boyd in introduction to Rail Passenger Corridors report, April 1981.

SLIP OF THE MONTH CLUB***

"IN TRAINING FOR THE BIG TIME...Hankies, please. The "Little Foxes" cast whizzes up to the Big Ap on the 26th, via Amtrak. Liz Taylor's hired a Club Car. (Eighteen first-class seats, 28 coach seats and a kitchen in the middle.)"

--"The Ear" column in Washington Star, Apr 22.

(With an Amtrak gourmet chef in attendance?)

CARS & CONSISTS

*LAKE SHORE LIMITED, train 49, Chicago Jun 21: engines 351, 341; cars 1614, 2053, 2986, 2933, 4616, 4004, 4617, 3105, 8502, 4636, 4000, 4618, 2984, 1266.

*PIONEER, train 25, Portland Jun 9: engine 217; cars 2913 "Pacific Garden", 20228 Amdinette, Hi-level 39934, Superliner 31034.

*MOUNT RAINIER, train 797, Portland Jun 9: engine 216; Superliner cars 34035 and 34023.

*WILLAMETTE VALLEY, train 753, Portland Jun 9: engine 204; Superliner cars 34045 and 34011.

*SUNSET LIMITED, train 1, New Orleans Jun 15: engines Cotton Belt 7777, Atk 701 & 700; cars 1243, Hi-level 39908, Superliner 31030, Hi-level 39960, Superliners 34039, 33001, 38019, 32045, 32007.

*ANN RUTLEDGE, train 301, Kansas City May 17: engine 264; Amfleet cars 21887, 21061, 21241, 20231, 21114, 21194, 21009 (large consist due to Wine Festival at Herman MO, and special stops made by all trains).

*KANSAS CITY MULE, train 341, Kansas City May 17: engine 243; Amfleet cars 21208, 21193, 21113, 21146, 21116, 21234, 20126 (see note above).

*COAST STARLIGHT, train 14, San Jose May 1: engines 324, 232; cars 1208, Hi-level 39909, Superliners 31007, 31010, 34000, 34049, 34077, 34006, 33016, 38026, 32033.

*BROADWAY LIMITED, train 40, Chicago May 9: engines 356, 357; cars 1225, 1222, 1248, 1610, 2438 "Pacific Castle", 2053, 4719, 4706, 4717, 4707, 3111, 8508, 4014, 4727, 4723, 2881 (last 4 cars & 1225 to Washington).

*SOUTHWEST LIMITED, train 3, Chicago Jun 21: engines 222, 293; cars 1254, 1229, Hi-level 39910, Superliner 31008, Hi-level 39957, Superliner 34082, Hi-level 39956, Superliners 33024, 38005, 32011, 32060.

RAIL FANTRIPS

Jul 18: Private car Lehigh Valley 353 roundtrip NY-Albany on rear of ADIRONDACK and MAPLE LEAF. Incl dinner prepared aboard. $115; limit 20 guests. Jul 19: Trip NY-Syracuse incl champagne brunch; return to NY on Amtrak. $135, limit 20. David L. Ross, 300 Winston Dr, #2020, Cliffside Park NJ 07010; 201-886-1359.

Aug 1 & 2: "Dixie Limited" Richmond-Keysville VA. Picnic dinner & festivities. Ex-CRESCENT diesel power. 1 trip ea. day. $25, $22 kids, dinner $4. Old Dominion Chapter NRHS, Box 8583, Richmond VA 23226. Advance tickets only sold.

Aug 22: Excursion on Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge RR; meal stop at Silverton. $20 roundtrip. Make check to NRHS & mail with SASE to Passenger Agent, PO Box 5181 TA, Denver CO 80217 or Box 824, Colorado Springs CO 80901.

Sep 3-7: 1981 convention of NRHS in Louisville KY ("Derby Rails 1981") will have special excursions with steam on the L&N & Southern, and diesel on ICG. Info: Wm F Mayer, Asst Natl Secy, NRHS, 4027 Busath Ave, Louisville KY 40218.

One Rail Fantrips listing is free. Send full info to:
RAIL TRAVEL NEWS, Fantrips Dept, PO Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

EXPRESS ADS

MASTERS OF RAIL TRAVEL--and Amtrak is our specialty. We enjoy seeing that you have the best accommodations available. Call or write us--GREAT WESTERN TOURS, Sheraton Palace Hotel, Suite 900, San Francisco 94105; (415) 398-2994. Receive your tickets by mail--pay by check or credit card. It's easy--one call does it all!

DINING CAR DISHES, glasses, silver, cloth. Timetables, guides, stationery, rules, metal & Pullman items, annual reports from 30 railroads. Long stamped envelope brings list. J. McClellan, 1752 S. Wichita, Wichita, Kan. 67213. Will buy items.

YOU'RE INVITED--MEXICO RAILFAN SPECIAL TRAIN--Aug 31-Sept 14--5313 kilometers on three railroads--Mexico City including passenger and freight yards plus Sahagun car factory, Metro and street cars, Copper Canyon rail trip, locomotive ride. Trip assembles in San Antonio (join anywhere--ride Amtrak en route). For full details, write or call Howard B. Thornton, Director, Midwest Travel Service, 2936R Bella Vista, Midwest City, Oklahoma, 73110--Telephone 405-732-0566.

DON'T VISIT PHILADELPHIA until you have a copy of "Delaware Valley Rails", the 192-page rail guide to the region's 15 counties. $11.50 (Pennsylvanians add 69¢ tax). John R. Pawson, Box 411, Willow Grove, PA 19090.

FROM BRITAIN--railway, traction, bus and maritime books and periodicals. Free catalog. Inland Empire Books, P.O. Box 9523-N, Minneapolis, MN 55440.

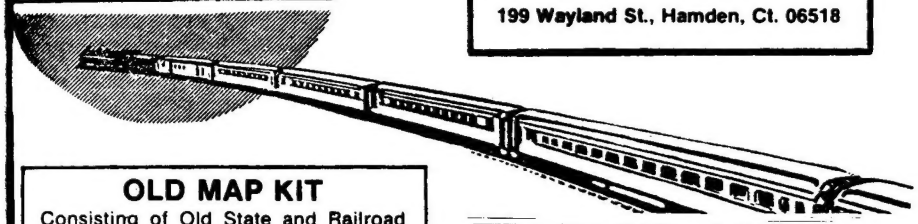
HELP FIGHT PEPIN PLAN FOR ATLANTIC RAIL EROSION. Join: Transport 2000 Atlantic, 40 Lorne Ave., Dartmouth, N.S. B2Y 3E7, Canada, for just $10 (Canadian funds).

RAILROAD PICTURE POSTCARDS of Foreign Steam in action. Trains in South Africa, India, South America, Mainland China, East Germany, Brazil and others. Twenty-four different color postcards for $2.50 postpaid. Mary Jayne's Railroad Specialties, Inc., Route 5, Box 132-A, Dept. RTN, Covington, Virginia 24426.

RTN ADVERTISING RATES: Express Ads $1 per line of 80 spaces. Display ads: only $1.25 per square inch. RAIL TRAVEL NEWS, Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

KRUGERRANDS and
MAPLE LEAFS
STORE SURPLUS ASSETS IN GOLD
1% commission at all times.
Toll Free 1-800-525-0380
Experienced, Dependable
The Alma House

Carl Loucks
....Selling Railroad Timetables
Employee Timetables, Public Timetables, Brochures, Guides, Postcards, Tickets, a full line of transporation paper items. New catalogue issued monthly. Stamped Self Addressed Envelope for latest list and specials.
199 Wayland St., Hamden, Ct. 06518



OLD MAP KIT
Consisting of Old State and Railroad maps 70-110 years old. All States. Some old County maps. Stamp for catalog.
The Northern Map Co.
Dept. RT Dunnellon, FL 32630.

MOVING?
Be sure to notify RTN of your new address as soon as possible. Don't rely on the Postal Service to forward your mail!

BACK ISSUES RTN is now offering our Tenth Anniversary Year volume, all the issues of 1980--18 issues sent all in one parcel at the price of $8 postpaid. Other back issues are also available and will be listed in upcoming issues, or write for information. RAIL TRAVEL NEWS, PO Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

Ted and Sylvia Blishak, owners of Accent on Travel, are frequent RTN contributors.
Accent on Travel holds Amtrak's "Golden Spike Award" for high ticket sales.

DON'T DIAL AMTRAK! Dial Ted and Sylvia Blishak at (415) 326-7330 for your reservations and AVOID BUSY SIGNALS AND "HOLDS"! Low fares for families, handicapped travelers, senior citizens. We also sell Britrail and Eurail passes, cruises, and air tickets.
Call "The Railfans" at Accent on Travel, 1030 Curtis Street, Menlo Park, California 94025. (415) 326-7330.